

6220
A
DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED JANUARY 18, MDCCXCIV,

AT THE

INTERMENT

OF

BENJAMIN SHATTUCK, Esq.

AN EMINENT

PHYSICIAN IN TEMPLETON;

WHO EXPIRED, JANUARY 14, MDCCXCIV,

IN THE FIFTY SECOND YEAR OF HIS AGE.

BY EBENEZER SPARHAWK, A. M.
PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN TEMPLETON.

PUBLISHED AT THE CONTINUED REQUEST OF MANY, WHO HEARD IT: TO
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D I S C O U R S E

DELIVERED AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE

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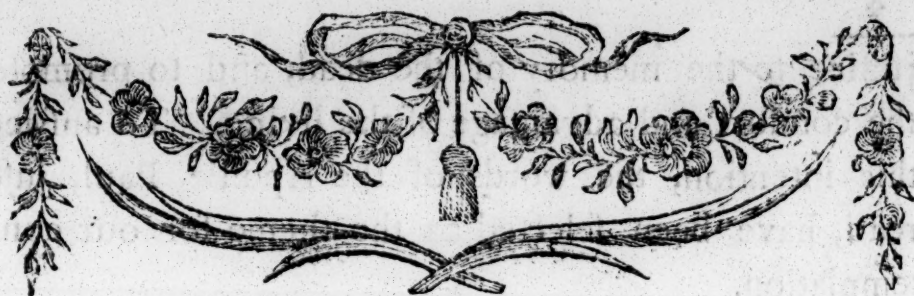
OF THE SCIENCE OF THE HUMAN MIND

AND OF THE SCIENCE OF THE HUMAN BODY

AND OF THE SCIENCE OF THE HUMAN SOUL

AND OF THE SCIENCE OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT

AND OF THE SCIENCE OF THE HUMAN HEART



A

FUNERAL SERMON.



A C T S xiii. 36.

David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption.



HIS concourse of people, the attendance of many very respectable characters, and the sadness, which pervades the assembly, distinguish the occasion of our now convening in the house of the Lord, as *peculiarly* mournful and affecting. These circumstances testify, that many, influenced by their high esteem of the deceased, wish to pay him these their last respects, and to condole his greatly bereaved family.

In attempting to accommodate himself to this occasion, it has been the speaker's desire and aim to do justice

justice to the memory of the dead, and to promote the comfort and advantage of the living. To answer this intention, the words of the Apostle Paul, just read, have been selected as the theme for our contemplation.

They contain a comprehensive account of King David, and are connected with those things, spoken to the Jews at Antioch, for the purpose of convincing them, that what this royal prophet foretold, in the xvth Psalm, relative to *not seeing corruption*, could not be understood, as referring to himself, because, as the event discovered, it was not accomplished in him; but as referring to another, even the Messiah, in whom it was fulfilled. The Apostle excites his hearers to recollect, that David, after he had been useful in life, agreeably to his advantages and his connections, on resigning his soul and breath, and being gathered to his deceased ancestors, *saw corruption*. When deposited in the sepulchre, he putrified, and, according to the primitive sentence, dust returned to dust. Though a good man, and eminently excellent and useful, he was not, after death, in regard to his body, distinguished from those of the opposite character.

Forbearing to pay any farther attention, at present, to the particular design, with which the Apostle speaks thus concerning David, we may regard this passage as giving us occasion to consider, The description of a man, excellently employed and useful in the several parts of his life: That it may, with peculiar propriety, be said of such an one, when he dies, that he falls asleep: Also, That it perfectly agrees with the Divine Character, for the man, thus
 excellent

excellent and useful, to be, as he is at death, laid by, and consigned to the corruption of the grave. After some attention to these articles, the subject may be closed, with an application suited to the present occasion.

I. We may consider, as exhibited in the text, the just and commendable description of a man, excellently employed and useful in life. He, like David, *serves his own generation, by the will of God.*

By *a man's own generation*, it is obvious to understand that set of persons, both elder and younger, who live in his time, and whilst his opportunity for usefulness continues, and whom, in certain ways, he has advantage to benefit. To *serve one's generation* is no other than to be active and vigorous, according to the station and relation of life, in which a man is placed, for advancing the interest and happiness of others. It is to employ his natural and acquired abilities ; his reason, memory, judgment, and speech ; his health and strength ; and his learning, property, and influence, to the purpose of his being useful, even as extensively, as can be expected. It is so to exert himself ; and to conduct in such a wise, regular and virtuous manner ; with such a degree of benevolence and decorum, that the most judicious may determine and pronounce of him, in regard to society, thus, He well answers the design of his creation, and improves his gifts and advantages to honorable and happy purpose.

It is fit to be observed, that there is a similarity between the natural and the political body. Both these must, in order to their subsistence, beauty and strength, have

have such particular parts and members, placed and connected in such a manner, and in good state for action, and, on occasion, in actual exercise. Directed by this comparison, we may conclude, that the business of serving the public is by no means confined to those men, who are able and disposed to move in the higher and more distinguished paths of life. Such, indeed, are often very specially and extensively useful ; but, that the good of society may be fully attended to and sufficiently promoted, those, who move in the lower and more private walks of life, are, under Providence, exceedingly needed, and, in the exercise of well directed care and vigor, beneficial in no small degree. Not only should the able Statesman, the skilful Physician, and the learned Divine, who exert themselves to discharge, with wisdom and energy, their respective duties, be highly esteemed, and gratefully remembered ; but the obscurest Husbandman and Mechanic, who, in their way, approve themselves skilful, kind and active, should also be well esteemed, and affectionately remembered. These, as well as the others, render very essential services to their generation, and are worthy of love and applause. Not those only, who are placed at the head of kingdoms or states, or appointed as magistrates, or selected as the fathers of a town, or chosen to take the oversight of churches ; but those, also, who are placed at the head of a family, should be considered as excellently serving their generation, provided they faithfully perform relative duties. When these, on being solicitous rightly to instruct and govern the young, and form them to virtue and usefulness, are successful in the business,

business, which is commonly true, we can hardly count or conceive, how much good is done by them to the public. Their posterity, probably, for several successions, will derive great benefit from their laudable exertions, and, on being acquainted with their excellencies and worth, will revere, praise and imitate them.

The man, who, in the wise use of his advantages, lives to excellent purpose, serves his generation, like David, as we may further consider, *by or according to the will of God*, as this expression may be understood relative both to the divine providence and the divine precept.

When God forms a man with a particular genius and propensity; succeeds means and endeavors to his being furnished for usefulness, correspondent to his peculiar turn and inclination; qualifies him for moving in such a sphere, and conducting such a branch of business to good advantage; and makes way for his being answerably improved; when this is the case, such an accomplished and useful man serves his generation, in exact agreement with the will of God's providence. Upon examining and comparing, he may rest, and even solace himself, in *this* conclusion, That he is employed, conformably to the divine purpose and pleasure.

There is another sense, in which the useful man serves his fellow-creatures, according to the will of God, viz. That which respects the divine command. Such an one acts, as Deity has expressly taught and enjoined. What does the holy word more plainly teach and require, than this, That a man should exert himself

himself to do good, in proportion to his ability and advantage ; and should seek to be better accomplished, and to be furnished with greater opportunity, that his usefulness may be more extensive. It is quite otherwise than strange, that God has enjoined us to be as far useful, as our capacity and peculiar seasons admit. This exactly agrees with his wisdom and love in providing for, and supplying his great family on earth. Surely nothing is better suited to honor, or can more please the Father of all, than to have the intelligent members of his family employ themselves for its good, and conform, for this purpose, to his counsels and commands.

That to serve our generation should be divinely commanded, perfectly accords, as we may fitly notice, with the life and example of the only begotten Son of God, the Lord of glory, when he dwelt among men. Did this inconceivably august personage go about doing good, and shew himself unwearied in seeking the benefit of men, and even give his life a ransom for many ? And is it expressly required, that we imitate him, as far as we can ? From these things, then, we must conclude the fitness and wisdom of the divine command, that we bring into use, and continually improve, for the benefit of others, all our gifts and abilities ; and that every one, who serves his generation, is in this actually conformed to God's preceptive will.

When a man, in the course of a useful and excellent life, performs the frequent acts of beneficence, with an habitual, and sometimes with an actual intention to conform to the divine pleasure, and to advance

vance the divine honor, God regards him as not only useful, but pious. That, in a course of well-doing, we should *intend* to obey and please God, is very necessary. How, but in consequence of having this sincere intention, can we expect to be accepted as his cordial and faithful subjects, and hope for that reward, which he, in his holy word, has promised.

What was last mentioned renders it suitable to observe, that he who, from the best principles, serves his generation, is accepted in this, as truly serving God. David gloried in his being the *servant* of God;* which shews, that, in his exertions to serve the interests of men, he aimed as high as the honor and pleasure of God. Because conscious of this, he expected to be felicitated as a servant of the Most High.

The view we have now taken of the man well employed and useful, as described in the text, does, it may be thought, direct and oblige us to pronounce him wise and amiable, and very worthy to be esteemed and praised. He has, we may notice, such just and exalted sentiments, as to abhor the thought of being the plague of mankind, and burden of society, and to disdain the notion of being a cypher, or of crawling through life like an insignificant reptile. He wishes and aims to act up to the dignity of his nature, and to the honor done him in his being a member of the intelligent creation; and to act also in conformity to all the wisdom and love God has displayed towards mankind. He aims, indeed, at his own honor and happiness, but only so far as these consist with,

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* Psalm cxvi, 16.

and are promoted by, a just regard to the honor of the Supreme, and the good of others.

How perfectly does it become us to rejoice in the providence and grace of God, which raise up and form men, who conduct worthily in their day ; and to take a very affecting notice of the divine disposal, in their removal by death, as what gives much occasion for grief and lamentation ?

To proceed to the next article.

II. It is to be considered, that of the wise, faithful and pious servant of his generation, we may, with peculiar propriety, say, when he dies, that he falls asleep.

As early as the days of Moses and Job, death was spoken of as a sleep.* In many passages of scripture, it is expressed and represented by this name. The term, as expressive of death, corresponds with some others, which are used in a moral as well as in a natural sense.

The time of life, in which we are active, is styled the day. The space which succeeds it, wherein activities wholly cease, is called the night. As night succeeds day ; so sleep and rest succeed the activities and toils of the day. Therefore, as when a man dies, we may say that his day is ended, and his night come on ; so, also, as when he dies, he ceases to be busy and vigorous, and ceases to appear ; retires from this active and toilsome scene ; rests from all his labors, all his pains, all his cares, all his sufferings, with which he has been attended, we may say of him, that he has fallen asleep. Indeed it seems difficult to believe, that then his soul sleeps. We may rather think, that

* Deut. xxxi. 16, and Job xiv. 12.

that the spiritual part, on being freed from all past incumbrance, becomes more active. But then the body sleeps, as it is wholly laid aside, to be seen no more ; and is not distempered, agitated and disturbed, as it was when living.

The death of Jairus' daughter, and that of Lazarus, are termed, by our Lord Jesus, a sleep, no doubt on a peculiar account, because he knew that they would be speedily raised. The death of men in general, is, in some measure, on the same account, fitly so called in the scriptures. As these give assurance of a general resurrection, men may well be spoken of, as sleeping, when death lays them by, and until they rise from the grave.

It may be now further considered, that the man, who has been worthily employed, and has approved himself piously useful in his life, may, with special propriety, be represented as, at his death, falling asleep. Such an one, as the close of life draws near, can take a retrospect and observe that, though, in the course of his life, there have been unhappy vacuities, which might and should have been filled up with acts of beneficence, and though he has been attended with many failures, yet his prevailing aim and endeavor have been right ; and that he has lived to some good purpose, has answered the end of his creation, shewn himself a Man, acted up to his advantages ; has served the public, and served his friends, and served his enemies ; has done good, by an application to his proper business, by his discourse, and by his example. As the useful and pious man, when quitting life, can take this comfortable review, and reflect with satisfaction

tion on his past endeavors that the world might be much better for him, on secular, on moral, and also on spiritual accounts ; he is, we may think, disposed to resign his breath in this devout manner : “ Lord, I have nothing to boast of. For thy mercies’ sake, in Christ, pardon my faults and my failings. So far as I have served thee and my generation I rejoice. The thought that, through thy grace, I have attempted and persevered in my endeavor to do good, composes and delights me. Into thy hand I commit my departing spirit, and to thy care my body, freely consenting, in compliance with thy wise and holy appointment, to sleep in the dust, and hoping in thy promise and power, that I shall obtain a glorious resurrection and immortality.” As the man of beneficence and piety dies, thus peacefully, and composes himself, in such a godly sort, to rest from all the activities and sufferings of this life, he may very suitably be said to fall asleep. None but such a character is, or can be, prepared *so* to commit himself to repose, *so* to shut his eyes, and dismiss his senses, and even his soul, to take rest.

We may now advance,

III. We shall consider, as was proposed, that it perfectly agrees with the divine character, for the useful and good man to be laid by, and consigned to corruption, as he is at death. *He is laid* unto his fathers, and sees corruption ; is lodged in the grave, the habitation of his ancestors, and *there* corrupts, moulders, and mingles with his kindred dust. In accounting for this, as consistent with the rectitude of God’s nature and government, we may recollect and notice several things.

This

This life, it appears, is but the beginning of our existence, and of our intellectual felicity. We are placed in this world, for our trial ; and, though we execute our probation laudably, we have no ground to expect a permanent reward, and complete happiness *here*. As all, in this world, have sin dwelling in them, are attended with sufferings, and have only an imperfect degree of light and knowledge ; so here, even the most excellent persons cannot be in a suitable state for the full enjoyment of those things, which conduce to, or constitute their sublime happiness. In order to the consummation of their felicity, they must remove to another world. Accordingly, God has not only revealed his purpose to felicitate, completely, all the pious, but also a future state, in which such shall be happy.

Though God will be thus merciful to them, yet his appointment is, that they, as well as others, die and return to dust. This is nearly connected with the primitive threatening, Gen. ii. 17. and the primitive sentence, Gen. iii. 19. In reference to which, the apostle Paul justly asserts, Rom. v. 12. That, “ as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” Sin having procured death to the human race, it cannot be contrary to God’s justice for him to appoint that all men should once die.

We have, indeed, abundant reason to believe, that Christ, the Son of God, has suffered to redeem sinners, and that his sufferings are sufficient, and will be effectual, to the complete deliverance of all the penitent and pious, from sin and misery ; but, as the
word

word and providence of God shew, it was no part of his design and business, by suffering, to prevent the death of any. However, through the worth and efficacy of his mediatorial obedience, death cannot prove destructive to the godly, but will be a benefit, by freeing them from all remains of sin, and introducing them to glory. It is, we may think, as consistent with God's kindness for his friends, to appoint that they should pass, by death and the grave, to perfect happiness, as it is, that they should be sufferers in this life.

We may further notice, that this appointed universal reign of Death, displays God's holiness, kindness, and wisdom, as it is a standing testimony of his displeasure at sin ; and the consideration of it, as such, is conducive, and in many instances effectual, to excite persons to renounce, avoid, and subdue sin.

It may be also mentioned, that this appointment of death and corruption, as the lot common to the useful and injurious, the good and the bad, displays God's kindness and wisdom, as by it the comfort and peace of mankind are better provided for. If persons of one description were exempted from mortality and its consequences, and others not so exempted, the distinction then made would very probably occasion ill affections and difficulties among men, and operate to the grief of individuals, and damage of society.

Though God is pleased to have death and corruption, the lot of the useful and excellent, as well as of others, yet this, as was intimated before, is no obstacle to their complete happiness. Christ has purchas-

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ed for them, among other benefits, a glorious resurrection and immortality ; and by *his own* resurrection given assurance of *theirs*. According to this, it is expressly promised in the gospel, that their vile bodies shall be restored from the grave, and so gloriously changed as to be fit companions for their souls in the celestial state.

When we duly ponder these things, must we not conclude, that it is suited to advance God's honor, for the most excellent of men to pass, by the way of death and the grave, as he has appointed they should, to the full possession and enjoyment of the heavenly inheritance.

The subject may now be applied to the occasion.

THE Friend and Gentleman, whose death we are lamenting, and to whom we are this day paying our last respects, did, I am persuaded, in the course of his life, so improve his abilities, as in a large measure to serve his generation, and to be eminently useful. He was furnished, by the God of nature, with a strong mind and much good sense. He obtained, through the divine blessing on his great exertions, a public education ; and, in consequence of his early choice of Physic for his study and profession, he enjoyed the advantage of studying *this*, with a *very eminent and worthy gentleman*,* whose instructions and maxims, profitable conversation, and wise conduct, no doubt, much enlarged the foundation of his usefulness.

Soon after the completion of his studies with that gentleman, he, on receiving an invitation, came to this place, principally with a design to pursue his delightful

* Hon. Oliver Prescott, Esq. of Groton.

ful business ; and was in a short time taken much notice of, as a Physician, by people in this and in adjacent towns. Through study and experience, for more than twenty four years, and upon being often very successful, he became greatly valued for his medical knowledge and skill. As he approved himself very guarded and agreeable in his conversation ; very sober and temperate ; firm and faithful and compassionate ; and discovered a readiness to use great exertions to ease the pains, remove the disorders, and relieve the distresses of persons ; of the *poor*, as well as of the rich ; and also, as he appeared even forward, in difficult cases, to consult with other Gentlemen of the Faculty, he became *much esteemed* and *very extensively improved* ; and has for some years been regarded, as *one of the first Medical Characters in this county*.

Though the practice of physic was very agreeable to him, and he was crowded with business, as a Physician ; yet his mind was by no means engrossed by medical matters. He attended to other concerns, and judged very accurately about them. Accordingly, his sentiment and advice, in affairs of difficulty and weight, were sought and respected.

He paid attention, in particular, to religious concerns, and had been a professor of Christianity, and in full communion with the church in this place, for many years. Things of a religious nature have, for sometime past, laid with peculiar weight on his mind, and he has been exercised with very perplexing doubts about his future state. Under them, he was disposed to cry to his God, and seek for the blessed consolations of the gospel.

His

His character, for sense and learning and integrity, and relative to morals and religion, being known, he was a few years since presented with a *Commission for the Peace*, and *accepted it* ; but the constant and numerous applications to him, as a Physician, hindered his performing much as a Magistrate. When he acted in this line, he approved himself judicious, and a friend to justice, order and peace.

In his last sickness, he manifested, under his great bodily distresses, becoming fortitude ; and, notwithstanding his peculiarly quick sensations, he, on calling into exercise the train of suffering virtues, bore with a good grace what came to his lot. He clearly foresaw the event of his disorders, and resigned to be removed from this stage of action, bidding adieu, with much benevolence and cordiality, to his dear family and numerous friends.

Thus lived and died this man of sense and skill ; of extensive usefulness and great worth. *Having served his generation, he is fallen asleep.* Yes, Dr. SHATTUCK is gone : Nearly twenty years before he arrived at the common age of man, he is gone. We shall have his company, hear his voice, and enjoy his sense and skill *no more* ; shall see his face, after this day, *no more* : And who, on the occasion, does not sigh and lament ?

In his death, his beloved family sustain a great and unspeakable loss ; and we wish most heartily to condole with them on this account.

YOU, MADAM, who have been the *consort* of the deceased, and have, with much patience and assiduity, assisted and comforted him under his toils and fa-

tigues and disorders, are now called to part with him. The stroke is heavy indeed. Your grief is very great. You summon, we are persuaded, the powers of your mind, and graces of your soul, to bear, in a christian manner, this exceedingly afflictive disposal of Providence, sensible that your covenant God and Father has done this. You will continue to implore and depend on divine grace, to support you, and sanctify this to you ; and will recollect and apply the divine consolations, with which the scriptures abound.

When, with a bleeding heart, with the tenderest feelings, you view this bereaved state of yourself and your dear children, recollect, in particular, that the Lord has presented this as his amiable character, That “he is the Father of the fatherless, and the widow’s Judge.”*

We fully believe, Madam, that it is your fixed purpose to be useful in your place, and serve your generation. As now the care of the family so entirely devolves upon you, there will be greater occasion and opportunity for you to manifest this. Will you not, therefore, call into renewed exercise, resolution, wisdom, and every other needful quality and virtue, that it may appear, you are, through divine grace, equal to the charge and burden, and greatly serviceable to the world, by forming your children to virtue and usefulness ? Remember, that by piously employing yourself, the preparation is continually advancing for *your* falling asleep, as your valuable comfort now has.

TO the CHILDREN of the deceased, a few things may be addressed.

My

My dear young friends, you are burying a parent, who was extremely tender and affectionate ; who, when you were in trouble, felt for you beyond expression. You are burying a parent, who was, in a very high degree, solicitous to have you furnished with useful knowledge, and formed to virtue, and qualified to appear *worthy persons* on the stage of action. This, your excellent and dear father, if concerned to have his life protracted, was so, no doubt, in a great measure, that, under God, he might be your guide and counsellor, and might, as he frequently expressed the matter, read you suitable lectures. But, alas ! he is fallen asleep, and retired, not to awake and appear until the resurrection morn. However, you should, for your comfort, remember, that your Father in heaven is infinitely wiser and more compassionate and powerful than the best disposed and most able earthly parent ; and that this blessed *Father of the fatherless* will be your guide, and guardian, and provider ; will not leave nor forsake you, if you put yourselves, by prayer and piety, under his care. That you may more certainly grow in wisdom, and in goodness, remember the wise instructions, and fervent wishes, of your good father, and be determined to conform to them, guarding against every thing, which is likely to hinder. Cultivate a good disposition, and seek to be, after his example, worthy persons. In this way, you will comfort your surviving parent, and be an honor, both to the deceased and to the living ; and, which is more, in this way, you will honor your Father in heaven, and prepare to fall asleep, after performing laudable service.

WE

WE with the *very aged surviving* PARENT of the deceased, not present, because of great infirmity, all the support and comfort needed on this trying occasion. It is very solacing, amidst the domestic troubles, with which he has been exercised, that this his son has conducted so worthily through life, and been such an extensive blessing to the world. It has been the hope of this very aged sire, that his son would have survived. Being disappointed, he will, we may expect, more readily put his trust in God, and more diligently prepare soon to sleep with all his several deceased relatives.

OUR respected Friends, now present, employed, as the deceased was, in the practice of relieving and healing the sick, will accept a short address.

You, gentlemen, are deserving, from individuals and from the community, in proportion to your care for becoming continually better furnished to perform the duties of your profession, and in proportion to your humanity and fidelity in performing them. Approving yourselves skilful practitioners, you will excellently serve your generation ; and approving yourselves, also, virtuous and godly, you will be accepted, not only as the worthy servants of your generation, but as the true servants of the Lord, and be prepared, when your mortal day closes, to fall asleep, in hope of a blessed resurrection.

This *spectacle* may, sirs, deeply affect *you*, in particular. It directs and prompts *you*, to consider, that though, in the use of your excellent skill, you save many from the pit of corruption, who are, in a sense, reduced to the brink of it, the time is coming, when,
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notwithstanding all the exercise of the medical art, you will fall victims to death, and lie in the bed of dust. Most certainly, therefore, it concerns you, as well as others, to be seasonably prepared for a pious and honorable resignation of life.

THE subject may now be applied to direct and comfort the *people of this town, and others*, who have found the deceased a very useful worthy man. *Our beloved Physician* is taken from us, when, with submission, we wished him to live many years longer. But we will not murmur. This is *the will of heaven*. We will be thankful, that God rendered him, for such a space, a substantial, and steady Physician, and in this, as well as other respects, a very beneficial member of society. Numbers of us have even special reason to be thankful for him: To his skill and care, our relief, in great distress, and the protraction of our lives are, under God, to be attributed.

As we know, by happy experience, what it is to enjoy a good Physician, let us be prayerful and diligent, to have our loss repaired, as far as may be expected. Let us be careful not to encourage any one to settle in this place as a Physician, who is not well instructed and accomplished, and a man of stability, virtue, and goodness.

TO close. Let all present entertain a serious concern to find it good for them, that they attend this funeral. Let us be reminded, that we shall all, in the sense of the text, fall asleep and see corruption, and that we can be prepared for this, *only* by a diligent and pious care to serve our generation, according to our ability and opportunity. Whilst we thank
a kind

a kind Providence, that we survive, let us be animated to use greater diligence, that we may be abundantly beneficial in our respective stations and relations, remembering, that if, in the exercise of benevolence and piety, we are diligent and faithful unto death, we may compose ourselves to sleep with our fathers, in a thankful and joyous prospect of inheriting the promises, and sharing in a glorious resurrection and immortality.

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